

2010: A Publishing Odyssey

With this first issue of the year, *Cell* launches a new format for online presentation of all research articles. This “Article of the Future” initiative reflects our commitment to evolve the concept of a scientific publication in step with the development of new technologies and functionalities both now and into the future.

The first print issue of *Cell* in 1974 established a highly recognizable format and presentation, and this *Cell* “look” has remained largely unchanged in the intervening years. The transition to online publishing in the mid-1990s brought many new opportunities for scientific journals. It revolutionized searchability and information discovery, dramatically increased the breadth and ease of access, and allowed for the inclusion and distribution of online supplemental materials such as movies and large datasets that could not be captured in print. In addition, many journals, *Cell* among them, took advantage of online technologies to add new functionalities around the core article, including commenting features and related citations links. But few have tackled the issue of how best to bring the powers of the new technologies to bear on the structure, organization, and presentation of the article itself. Thus, for most journals the online article of today remains essentially an electronic facsimile of the traditional print article.

Over the past year, *Cell* has taken this challenge to heart. In conjunction with our authors and readers, we have worked to develop an online format that breaks free from the restraints of paper and allows each reader to create a personalized path through the article’s content based on his or her own interests and needs. Underlying the “Article of the Future” is a new approach to structuring the traditional sections of the article, moving away from a strictly linear organization required by print toward a more integrated and linked structure. Tabbed and hyperlinked navigation through the Introduction, Results, Figures, Experimental Procedures, and Discussion allows subject-area experts to quickly access in-depth information on a particular experi-

ment while providing more general readers an opportunity to absorb the conceptual insights without being overwhelmed by additional details.

Within this overall architecture are a number of exciting functionalities. For example, the Data tab, a film strip of thumbnails for all of the figures in the paper (including supplemental figures), allows a reader to rapidly scan through the data and then connect from an individual figure to the related textual discussion of the findings. The Results tab lets the reader view a zoomable figure, the legend, and associated Results text easily on a single screen. Highlights and a Graphical Abstract on the landing page of each article complement the traditional Summary text and promote article browsing by creating a visual summary and bullet points that easily convey the main take-home message of the paper. And the online display fully integrates supplemental information including multimedia content within the context of the main article and facilitates more fluid navigation between the two. Of course if you prefer to read the classic version, it remains accessible as a printable PDF with options to view and print either the core paper or the core paper plus supplemental information.

As with any new initiative, moving a concept through an experimental prototype to a fully scaleable production version takes the collaborative efforts of many. We would like to thank the readers who provided valuable, constructive, and encouraging feedback on the prototypes and the authors in the first few issues of this year for their enthusiasm and forbearance in working with us to bring this new format to fruition. We are tremendously excited by the new opportunities that the “Article of the Future” initiative brings to our authors and readers, and as the name implies, we seek to continually evolve and improve how our articles are presented online to best serve the needs of the scientific community. So we invite you to fully explore the HTML versions of the articles in this issue and welcome your feedback at article2010@cell.com. Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and productive new year from everyone at *Cell*!

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